DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 070 465 LI 004 017

AUTHOR	Cole, John Y.
TITLE	LC in the 19th Century; An Informal Account.
INSTITUTION	Library of Congress Professional Association, Washington, D. C.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	15p.; (0 References)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Chronicles; *Government Libraries; History; National Libraries
IDENTIFIERS	*Library of Congress

ABSTRACT

A brief historical account of the Library of Congress from its establishment in 1800 up to the development of a new classification scheme in the early 1900's is presented. A chronology of major events from 1800 to 1907 is included. (SJ)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED 070497

LC IN THE 19th CENTURY

◆●◆

an informal account

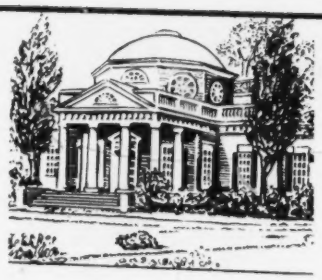
by
John Y Cole

ED 004 014

LC in the 19th Century: An Informal Account has been published in an edition of 1200 copies by the Library of Congress Professional Association (1972). These essays first appeared, in substantially the same form, in the LCPA Newsletter during 1970 and 1971. This is not an official Library of Congress publication. The views expressed are solely those of the author. Mr. Cole is on the staff of the Assistant Director for Library Resources in the Reference Department.

CONTENTS

Jefferson Take-Off . . 2; George the Third. .3; Ebb Tide . . 4; Bordering on Greatness . . 5; Struggle for a Structure I . . 7; Struggle for a Structure II . . 8; A New and Monumental Beginning . . 10; Bacon Slicing . . 12; LC and its Collections, a Chronology 1800-1907 . . 14.



JEFFERSON TAKE-OFF

Many American traditions and institutions are traced to Thomas Jefferson; in the case of LC, it really happened. As Vice-President Jefferson took an active part in the Library's establishment in 1800. He maintained this close interest during his Presidency, even personally preparing a catalog of desiderata in 1802. That list formed the basis for the fledgling Library's early acquisitions. LC's first catalog was issued in the same year; ten pages in length, it lists 964 volumes (classified by size) and nine maps. To care for the tiny legislative library, housed in the Capitol building, President Jefferson appointed his personal friend and "campaign manager," John Beckley of Virginia. A skilled behind-the-scenes political strategist, Beckley had been instrumental in Jefferson's election, and the Library appointment was a political plum. The first Librarian of Congress received $2 a day for his duties and also served as the first Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Beckley was well aware of his friend's keen interest in the Library, and he joined the President in aggressively soliciting books for its collection. But the Librarian had many enemies, mostly Federalists, and particularly Alexander Hamilton and George Washington, whom he contemptuously called "old W" and had tried to get impeached. Another opponent proved to be the only other LC staff "member," Josias Wilson King, the House of Representatives engrossing clerk. In 1806 Mr. King filed a formal complaint with Congress about Mr. Beckley's behavior. King claimed that Beckley had agreed to pay him $1 a day for arranging and labeling the books, but that Beckley had never paid him the agreed-upon sum; in the meantime, he had been doing all the Librarian's work. LC's first personnel dispute resulted in the first Congressional investigation of Library affairs. The employee lost.

Librarian Beckley was in poor health and, in 1807, he died in office. Patrick Magruder, a lawyer and former Congressman from Maryland, asked for and obtained the combined post of Librarian and Clerk of the House. He quickly

established new and severe rules for the loan of books to Congressmen: folios could only be kept three weeks and the overdue fine was a stiff $3 a day, quartos two weeks and $2, and octavos one week and $1 a day.

In the War of 1812 the British burned the unfinished Capitol building, including the 3,000 volumes in the Library. Contrary to legend and a good story, LC's books did not serve as capital kindling. Nonetheless, as related in a contemporary account, the British commander expressed polite regret at the burning of the books: "I lament most sincerely I was not apprized of the circumstance, for had I known it in time, the books would most certainly have been saved. . . I make war neither against Letters or Ladies."

For failing to protect the Library during the fire, in 1815, Librarian Magruder was fired. He claimed he was a scapegoat and that Congress seemed all too willing "to sacrifice not only my family but my reputation;" perhaps his high Library fines and restrictive loan policies were the true causes of Congressional resentment.

The burning of the Library in 1814 was a critical step in LC's development and, one must admit in retrospect, a most effective use of the books: the Library became a modest cause celebre. The blaze sparked new Congressional interest in the Library and a suggestion from ex-President Jefferson, retired to Monticello and almost bankrupt, that Congress might be interested in purchasing his personal library to replace the burned volumes.

POSTER, PRACTICAL PENMANSHIP, 1851, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

GEORGE THE THIRD

In 1814, after the destruction by the British of the Capitol and its tiny Congressional Library, Congress engaged in a lively debate about the proposed purchase of ex-President Jefferson's personal library. Opponents of the acquisition, including Daniel Webster, were Federalists who objected to: 1) Thomas Jefferson, 2) the large number of foreign-language literary and philosophical works in the library, including volumes by Voltaire, Rousseau, and other French Revolutionaries, and 3) the cost of the library. The vote was a squeaker: by a margin of 81 to 71 Jefferson's library of 6,487 volumes was purchased for $23,950. The Library of Congress had been re-established with vengeance; the size of the old Library was more than doubled and Jefferson's subversive literary and philosophical works helped to expand the scope of the Library into a "most admirable substratum for a National Library." Jefferson used the money from the sale to pay off his creditors.

George Watterston, a local writer and poet, was appointed as the third Librarian of Congress by President Madison in 1815, and served as the first Librarian who was not also the Clerk of the House of Representatives. A few years earlier, Watterston had dedicated a poem to Dolly Madison, the President's wife, as follows: "Madam, I have presumed to address this political effusion to you, from the reputation you have acquired of being desirous to promote the cause of general literature." Local gossips whispered that the dedication was responsible for Watterston's appointment, but it is more likely that he gained the position because of his reputation as Washington's leading (albeit only) man-of-letters. How could the author of The Lawyer, or, Man as He Ought Not Be, A Tale (1808) or The Child of Feeling, A Comedy in 5 Acts (1809) be denied the job?

While the Capitol was being restored, the Library was housed (and Congress met) in Blodget's Hotel, at 7th and E Sts., N. W. It was from Blodget's that Jefferson's catalogue

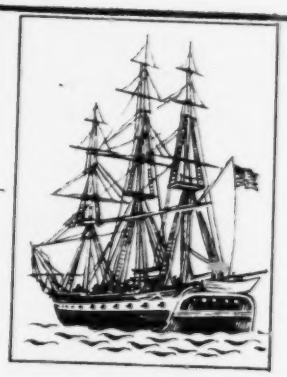
of his library was issued; ambitiously, it was titled Catalogue of the Library of the United States (1815). Jefferson's classification scheme, with a few modifications, was to be followed by LC until the end of the century. Perhaps inspired by the catalogue title, in 1817 Senator Fromentin of Louisiana introduced a resolution calling for a separate Library building to be built on Delaware Avenue, north of the Capitol. But the Library was not able to shift into its own building for another 80 years; in the meantime, it was moved back into the Capitol.

The Library under George Watterston became a modest literary center, where the bookish and other members of Washington society rendezvoused. If Watterston was truly a "supercilious dilettante," as some charged, he also was productive: during his 14 years as Librarian he published 6 more books. And the Library made progress, as in 1824 when it received the first in a long succession of $5,000 annual appropriations for the purchase of books. A small but frightening set-back was a fire in the Library on December 22, 1825, but a bucket brigade which included Congressmen "who vied with one another in their exertions to save the Library" extinguished the flames within an hour. A verse in a local newspaper, perhaps penned by the Librarian himself, moralized:

> "The Congress Library has been on fire,
> But very little damage is sustained;
> By error only, prudence we acquire,
> 'Tis well experience is so cheaply gained."

Librarian Watterston was removed from office in May 1829, not for his poetry but for his politics. A ferrent Whig and diehard supporter of Henry Clay, Watterston never should have expected to remain in office during the Democracy of newly-elected President Andrew Jackson, but he did. When Jackson replaced him by appointing John Silva Meehan as Librarian, ex-Librarian Watterston indignantly stomped out of the Library taking the Library record books with him. Until his dying day, he fought to be reinstated as Librarian.

While he waited, George supported himself as a journalist, author, and one of the first local "boosters" of the city of Washington; among other activities, he was a founder and a pillar of the Washington Monument Society and the author of two gushy guidebooks to the city. During the 1840's two newly-elected Whig Presidents failed to recognize the wisdom of Watterston's reappointment as Librarian. In 1850 he became disgruntled and turned Democrat. As final revenge, he let his children practice penmanship in the Library's record books, which were not returned to LC until after George Watterston's redeath in 1854.



EBB TIDE

President Andrew Jackson, anxious to replace George Watterston, the arrogant Whig who was Librarian of Congress, first offered the job to Charles P. Tutt; Mr. Tutt turned it down, however, preferring an appointment as U.S. Navy agent at Pensacola. Jackson's second choice was John Silva Meehan, a local printer, newspaperman, and loyal Democrat, who became Librarian in 1829. Mr. Meehan was to hold the librarianship for 32 years.

During most of his administration, Librarian Meehan had to content with the journalistic snipings of ex-Librarian Watterston, but Meehan remained calm, efficient, and dull. The Law Library was established in 1832, but LC grew slowly. In 1836 Congress had an opportunity to buy the famous Buturlin collection, a 25,000 volume library of Italian and Latin classics which contained hundreds of 15th century works, but the motion to buy the collection was permanently tabled by Henry Clay, and the collection was lost. The close personal friendship and political alliance between Clay and ex-Librarian Watterston, who wanted his old job back, did not go unnoticed in the press. The Buturlin collection would have been a major addition, for in 1836 LC contained a mere 24,000 volumes, including about 4,000 in French, 268 in Italian, 29 in Chinese, and only 12 in German.

In 1840, Alexandre Vattemare, the famous French ventriloquist and mimic, created a reverberation in Congress with his plan for the international exchange of documents. Vattemare's concept was retained in the exchange system later established by the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress, but his own plan was rejected by knowledgeable officials who regarded him merely as an offensive pest who could throw his voice.

In 1848 the British Museum had the world's largest collection of books relating to America, and by mid-century the library of the newly-established Smithsonian Institution was more important than the Library of Congress as a library and as a center of bibliographic activity. Charles Coffin Jewett, the Smithsonian librarian, had grand plans to make the Smithsonian the national library. He was making fine progress until Joseph Henry, the Smithsonian's first Secretary, altered Jewett's plans by firing him.

In 1851 Librarian Meehan endured his library fire, as had Librarians Magruder and Watterston before him. Unfortunately, it was a serious one, destroying 35,000 of the 55,000 volumes in LC, including about 2/3 of Jefferson's library. Congress acquitted the Librarian of any blame, however, and made generous appropriations for new Library quarters and for replenishing the book collection. On August 23, 1853, the new fireproof Library room, constructed of iron and stone and boasting elaborate iron grillwork throughout, was opened to the public. The press reported that Librarian Meehan greeted visitors with his "well-known cordiality and bonhomie." Sir Charles Lyell, the famous British scientist, visited the room with President Pierce (Franklin S.) and pronounced it "the most beautiful room in the world."

Until the Civil War years, the selection of books for the Library was performed by the Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library and it was a cautious selection by cautious gentlemen. In the 1850's, as the sectional schism between north and south deepened, Library Committee chairman Senator James A. Pearce tried to calm Congress and the nation by carefully excluding from the Library all books which might inflame sectional feelings. For this reason, Senator Pearce reportedly refused to allow LC to place a subscription to the newly-established Atlantic Monthly in 1857.

President Lincoln replaced Librarian Meehan in 1861 with Dr. John G. Stephenson, an Indiana physician who preferred to spend more time on the battlefields than in the Library. Librarian Stephenson's interest in the Union cause was more than patriotic; he was involved in financial speculations which included the Library's accounts, and a Congressional resolution in 1873 finally restored to the Library's London book agent the $1,480 of which he had been "unjustly defrauded" by Stephenson during the war. But Dr. Stephenson had "retired" from the Library in 1864, and as the Civil War came to a close, so did the lean years of the Library of Congress.

BORDERING ON GREATNESS

Ainsworth Spofford, the energetic Librarian of Congress from 1864 to 1897, had no time to waste with bores and knew how to get rid of them. He wrote: "The bore is commonly one who, having little or nothing to do, inflicts himself upon the busy persons of his acquaintance, and especially upon the ones whom he credits with knowing the most--the librarians. Receive him courteously, but keep on steadily at the work you are doing when he enters. If you are skillful, you can easily do two things at once, for example, answer your idler friend or your bore, and revise title-cards, or mark a catalogue, or collate a book, or look up a quotation, or write a letter, at the same time. Never lose your good humor, never say that your time is valuable, or that you are very busy; never hint at his going away; but never quit your work, answer questions cheerfully, and keep on, allowing nothing to take your eyes off your business. By and by he will take the hint, if not wholly pachydermatous, and go away of his own accord. By pursuing this course I have saved infite time, and got rid of infinite bores, by one and the same process."

Spofford came to Washington from Cincinnati, where he had been a bookseller, abolitionist, pamphleteer, and newspaper editor. He accepted the job of Assistant Librarian in 1861, and President Abraham Lincoln appointed him Librarian on December 31, 1864. The ambitious Spofford never viewed LC as anything but the national library, and immediately set to work making the Library fit his vision.

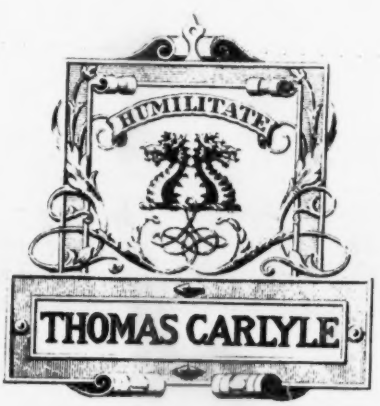
In 1865 the Library's rooms in the Capitol were expanded, and in 1866 the 40,000 volume Smithsonian deposit came to LC; in 1867 LC's system of international exchanges was established and the famous Peter Force collection of Americana was purchased, with a little help from Spofford's Cincinnati friends; in 1870 Spofford's behind-the-scenes advocacy brought, through the Copyright Law of 1870, two copies of all copyrighted works to the Library. In five years, LC's collection had become "national" in scope and the largest in the U.S.

Congressmen, authors, and other prominent figures frequently relied on Spofford for reference help, and many anecdotes were told about his remarkable memory. The best-known story was told by General Lew Wallace, who asked Spofford's help in locating background material for his novel Ben Hur. Finding nothing suitable in LC, Spofford directed Wallace to a volume in the Harvard Library, citing the correct room, shelf number, and location ("sixth from the south end.") Spofford's memory was put to another test in the 1896 hearings held by the Library Committee on the "condition" of LC just prior to the move into the new building. His testimony fills 103 printed pages and touches on virtually every aspect of the Library's history and operations. One of the other librarians testifying about the role of the national library was Herbert Putnam from the Boston Public Library, a future Librarian of Congress.

Spofford's prodigious bibliographic memory was rivaled only by his absentmindedness and innocence in business matters. In 1895 Treasury Department auditors were shocked at his virtually non-existent bookkeeping habits, and they reported a $30,000 shortage in his copyright accounts. But in 1897 the mystery was solved and Spofford vindicated: about $30,000 in uncashed money orders, checks, and cash was found stuffed in books and desk drawers when the old Library and its contents were transferred into the new building. For over 20 years Spofford had habitually left incoming copyright fee payments in the books which were piled in growing heaps throughout LC or in various desk drawers, instead of turning the payments into the Treasury Department.

LC's first space race had begun in 1871, when the Librarian first pointed out the need for a separate Library building. As the flow of copyright deposits into the cramped rooms in the Capitol continued, so did Spofford's pleas for space. Funds to construct a new building were finally appropriated in 1886 and the magnificent structure, "the largest, costliest, and safest" library building in the world, was occupied in 1897--26 years after Spofford first proposed it.

Between 1864 and 1897 the book collection grew from 80,000 to over 800,000 volumes and the staff in the Capitol rooms from 7 to 42 employees. When the new building opened in 1897, the weary 72-year-old Mr. Spofford stepped down as Librarian, with help from President McKinley; LC needed a full-time administrator, not an old-fashioned bibliographer and bookman. But Spofford's work was done: while getting rid of bores, he provided the collections and the building for a national library.



STRUGGLE FOR A STRUCTURE I

In 1887 Senator Justin S. Morrill of Vermont complained to Secretary of the Interior. L.Q.C. Lamar about delays in the construction of the new Library of Congress building: "I really had hoped to see the building completed within my lifetime, but I fear now that I shall never see it done." Morrill did live to see the new building, but the fear he expressed was shared by almost everyone involved in the struggle for the Library building, which began in 1871 and did not end until the Library moved from the Capitol into its new building in 1897. In the intervening quarter of a century, librarians, Congressmen, architects and engineers, scholars, and the general public contested the building's design, location, methods and materials of construction, and - most importantly - its very purpose. It was necessary to surmount acrimonious charges and countercharges, hundreds of minor disputes, endless bureaucratic snarls, at least one fist-fight, numerous legislative delays and postponements, and two formal Congressional investigations before the $7 million building became a hard artifact. Once it did, the Library of Congress was permanently and unalterably enshrined as America's national library.

Librarian Ainsworth Spofford first suggested a separate Library building in 1871; the next year his annual report featured an "extended plea" for such a structure. Because the Copyright Law of 1870 triggered the steady flow of copyright deposits into the Library's tiny rooms in the Capitol, Spofford complained it was impossible "to make the present unfit and inadequate apartments subserve the needs of a great national library." He admitted the Library was "comparatively an unfit place for students." In his report he outlined plans for the proposed building, suggesting a central reading room and separate departments for copyright, maps, fine arts, and periodicals.

Congress responded almost immediately. In 1873 it appointed a Commission to select a plan and location for the building and appropriated $5,000 for this purpose. A competition for the best architectural plan, based on Spofford's general specifications, drew 27 entries, the first prize of $1,500 being awarded to the firm of Smithmeyer & Pelz of Washington for their Italian Renaissance design. Smithmeyer & Pelz had also submitted designs in French Renaissance, German Renaissance, Romanesque, and Gothic styles. Another entry was dubbed "Gothic Byzantine."

This contest, however, only marked the beginning of a "running competition" between architects and indecisive lawmakers which would last 13 years. In 1875, for example, the Joint Committee on the Library ordered that plans be prepared for a Gothic-style building, the 1873 competition notwithstanding.

The problem of a site for the new building was at least as unsettled and controversial as that of its design. Librarian Spofford, perhaps foreseeing the handwriting on the wall, warned in his 1875 annual report that Congressional neglect and indecisiveness would "soon place its Librarian in the unhappy predicament of presiding over the greatest chaos in America." In addition to the site east of the Capitol which was finally selected, Judiciary Square, the Botanical Gardens, and the Mall were seriously considered and vigorously advocated as possible sites. Proposed architectural designs fluctuated according to both the site currently in favor and the personal tastes of the Congressmen then in office. Accordingly, between 1876 and 1881, new designs were prepared in three styles - French Renaissance, Romanesque, and German Renaissance.

The Botanical Gardens site was rejected as too spongy in 1877. In 1878 the extension of the east front of the Capitol, in lieu of a separate building, was rejected by a specially-appointed Commission, which instead recommended a building at Judiciary Square. But Senator Morrill strongly advocated the east plaza location, so yet another Commission, this one of three architects, was appointed in 1880. The architects reached the same conclusions as the 1878 Commission, and their recommendations suffered the same fate. In 1880, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted wrote a letter to the Nation which expressed a prevalent feeling; he felt further postponement of the Library building was "tantamount to an order abolishing the Library of Congress for most practical purposes, and substituting for it . . . a warehouse for the

storage in bulk of a great, idle, heterogeneous mass of printed paper." Because of its inaction on the Library building, the 46th Congress was labeled a "do-nothing Congress" by the New York Tribune.

In 1881 President Chester A. Arthur asked for action on the Library building question in his annual message to Congress. Thus encouraged, the major advocates of the separate building, Senator Morrill, Senator Voorhees, and the patient but slowly submerging Librarian Spofford, hoped for the best.

But 1882 was not a good year. First, the most hare-brained scheme of all surfaced. It was proposed that the dome of the Capitol be lifted 50 feet to secure the additional space needed by the Library. Serious debate ensued before the plan was squashed. Then the Library Committee, vacillating as ever, asked the architects to prepare a revised version of the 1875 Gothic design. And William Frederick Poole, with the support of the American Library Association, joined the fracas by calling for a more functional and utilitarian design than the monumental "showplace" design favored by architect John L. Smithmeyer, the architectural profession, and most Congressmen.

During this exhaustive debate, Spofford and his friends in Congress were continually forced to defend their concept of LC as a national library, in addition to threading through the disputes over the building's style, site, and design. John Shaw Billings, Librarian of the Surgeon-General's Library, called for the decentralization of the national library into separate national libraries of medicine, law, astronomy, natural history, and physics, chemistry, and mechanics. Representative Holman of Indiana, the principal Congressional foe of a separate building, felt LC should remain solely a legislative library with a book collection not exceeding 20,000 volumes, and that any additional books or materials should be distributed systematically to the states of the union.

The great day arrived on April 15, 1886, when Congress authorized the purchase of the east plaza building site and the erection of a building according to the Italian Renaissance design submitted by Smithmeyer & Pelz. Uncharacteristically, Senator Morrill, Senator Voorhees, and Librarian Spofford embraced each other - momentarily but joyfully - when the Senate vote was announced. Phase one of the struggle was over.

STRUGGLE FOR A STRUCTURE II

On April 15, 1886, after a repetitious, often absurd 14-year struggle, Congress finally authorized the construction of a separate building for the Library of Congress on the east plaza facing the Capitol. It was to be of Italian Renaissance design, as originally planned by Smithmeyer & Pelz, and John L. Smithmeyer was appointed architect and placed in charge of construction. Congress appropriated $500,000 and appointed a three-man Commission, consisting of the Secretary of the Interior, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Librarian of Congress, to carry out the Act. The Commission chose the exact site for the building, preferring the south side of East Capitol Street, then occupied by a string of houses known as Carroll Row. Legal action was necessary to dislodge several reluctant homeowners, but the site was finally secured for $585,000, and the buildings torn down during the winter of 1886-1887. Six workmen were injured when the north wall of Carroll Row fell unexpectedly, but Library officials refused to view the incident as an omen.

Excavation began in the summer of 1887, but progress was slow as conflicts arose between Smithmeyer and Commission members. When it came to important details, the Act of 1886 was vague, at best. While authorizing the building, it failed to fix a limit on its cost, or set a completion date, nor did it include specifications for construction materials.

In 1887, Senator Morrill, a strong advocate of the building, complained that construction progress was so slow, he did not think he would live to see the building completed. Shortly thereafter, a controversy over the quality of cement to be used almost brought work to a complete halt. In early 1888 Senator Vest called for an investigation, complaining that all he could see was a "magnificent fence around a big hole." A New York newspaper chided, "To be sure that this big hole shall not be stolen, four watchmen are employed to keep their vigilant eyes always upon it . . .

if matters go on as they stand, the great-grandchild of the youngest married couple in the District will not live to see the building completed." Obviously the Commission members did not have the experience, knowledge, or time to properly oversee the construction, so in March 1888 Bernard R. Green, engineer, graduate of Harvard, and assistant to General T. L. Casey in the completion of the Washington Monument and construction of the Executive Office Building, was hired as Superintendent of Construction. Smithmeyer remained as the architect.

THE eight circular staircases which connect the reading room with the book-stack and extend from ground floor to top tier of stack in the library, were built by

The L. SCHREIBER & SONS CO.

Iron Works, Cincinnati, Ohio

These stairs are models of construction and finish for this class of work, and by maintaining the same general good standard of workmanship throughout its extensive establishment, THE L. SCHREIBER & SONS CO. has attained a prestige second to none in the country.

On May 29, 1888 Congress began the investigation into "what contracts had been made" and the "cause of the delay in the progress of the work." Smithmeyer's cement problem was rehashed and Richard G. Bright, "ex-sergeant-at-arms of the Senate, and counsel for the contractors whose cement was rejected . . . testified that he did not regard Mr. Smithmeyer as either honest or capable." The foundations of the building were laid during the summer of 1888, and the old controversy over the architectural design resurfaced, with the Philadelphia Press labeling Smithmeyer's design "a botch," and calling for a new competition to be judged by a jury of architects and librarians.

In the House of Representatives, the building continued to meet stubborn resistance. Representative Holman insisted that the Supreme Court chambers be placed in the Library building, especially if it were to cost as much as $7 million, as Superintendent Green had testified. Fearful of the $7 million expenditure, in August 1888 the House Appropriations Committee eliminated from its pending bill the funds necessary to continue construction. A local newspaper attacked the Committee in an editorial titled "Abolish This Band of Incompetents and Obstructionists."

In the midst of this hassle, portrait painter A. B. Heaton announced the completion of a "historical group portrait" of the 18 men, mostly Congressmen, whose "wisdom and idealism" had made the new Library building possible. Senators Morrill and Voorhees were featured, along with Librarian Spofford and architect Smithmeyer. A single member of the Joint Library Committee, Representative William G. Stahlnecker of N.Y., was absent from the portrait, the artist noted, "as he demanded a central position which could not be accorded to a new and young member of the House." Stahlnecker achieved a central place in another Library matter, however. In September 1888, a special Congressional inquiry investigated charges that he had improperly tried to influence Smithmeyer to use marble from a quarry in New York in which Stahlnecker's father was a major stockholder. He was exonerated. Eventually most of the marble for the building came from New Hampshire.

Another milestone was reached on October 2, 1888, when Congress abolished the Commission and placed the Chief of Army Engineers, General Thomas Lincoln Casey, of Washington Monument and Executive Office Building fame, in charge of the design and construction of the building. Another $500,000 was appropriated, and General Casey was instructed to prepare plans for a building not exceeding $4 million in its total cost. Architect Smithmeyer was fired but Casey kept Paul J. Pelz, Smithmeyer's former partner, who had helped in the preparation of the original plans. Casey shrewdly had Pelz prepare two plans for the consideration of Congress, each based on the original April 15, 1886, Italian Renaissance design: a $4,000,000 plan, as instructed, and a $6,000,000 plan which retained the full dimensions of the building.

In January 1889, the House investigating committee filed its report. In conceding that Congress must bear "some share of the blame for this unsuccessful attempt to construct a Library building," it strongly urged the adoption of the $4,000,000 plan. However, the Library's friends in the Senate again prevailed, aided by General Casey's persuasive performance, and on March 2, 1889, Congress adopted the $6,000,000 plan. The Washington Star noted the occasion with a one line editorial": "Hurrah for the six million dollar Congressional Library building!"

THE Hardware of the Library of Congress Building is for the most part of plain bronze largely made to order from government specifications. Both the locks and hardware were furnished by THE YALE & TOWNE MANUFACTURING COMPANY of 84-86 Chambers Street, New York City; works at Stamford, Conn.

Construction resumed in the spring of 1889, and in May of 1890 Congress passed a resolution favoring the laying of the cornerstone "with suitable Masonic ceremonies." Unfortunately, the resolution was tabled, and on August 28, 1890, it became necessary to lay the cornerstone without ceremony "to avoid serious delay in construction." Placed on the northeast corner of the building, the stone contained local newspapers and public documents relating to the building's fitful legislative history. Work then proceeded rapidly, and photographs documenting the structure's rise were taken every ten days.

In 1892, when the building had reached half of its full height, General Casey fired architect Pelz and hired Edward Pearce Casey, his son, "to prepare the drawings for the interior architecture and scheme of decoration." The superstructure was completed in 1894, the interior sculpture and mural paintings two years later and finally after a 26-year struggle, the new national library opened its doors to an admiring public on November 1, 1897.

Miles Pneumatic Tube Company,

(JOHN HANCOCK BUILDING),

BOSTON.

We installed all the pneumatic tubes in the Building for Library of Congress for a message service between the reading room and all the stacks.

We supplied a pneumatic tube running from the same building underground to the U. S. Capitol, on the Woodman system, shown in accompanying cut, now in extensive use.

The Automatic Mechanical Book Carriers, for carrying books between the reading room and the book stacks in this library were especially devised by the treasurer and others of our company.

Pneumatic Tubes.
Pneumatic Elevators.
Mechanical Carriers.

THE IRON AND STEEL BOOK STACKS AND SHELVING IN THE NEW LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Were made by

THE SNEAD & CO. IRON WORKS

LOUISVILLE, KY.

A NEW AND MONUMENTAL BEGINNING

"I grieve by day and night that I am not in Peking," wrote Librarian of Congress John Russell Young to a friend about a year after President McKinley had appointed Young as Librarian. A journalist, diplomat, and author of Around the World With General Grant (in two volumes, 1879), Young had served as U.S. Ambassador to China from 1882 to 1885, and obviously was not finding the job of Librarian entirely suited to his taste.

Appointed on July 1, 1897, Young's first act was to appoint Ainsworth Spofford, who had served as Librarian since 1865, as his Chief Assistant. Young's first responsibility was the move of the Library from its overflowing rooms in the Capitol into the magnificent new gold-domed "monument to learning" across the east plaza. Over 800 tons of Library books and other accumulated materials were discovered in various parts of the Capitol and transported to the new building in one-horse express wagons during August, September, and October of 1897. The new Library, with 108 employees rattling around in the building, opened its doors to the public on November 1, 1897. According to the Evening Star, the first book asked for was "not-on-shelf; in fact, it was not even in the Library as its publication date was too recent.

The new building was the wonder of Washington when it opened; many observers felt its grandeur surpassed that of the Capitol itself. The local citizenry was ecstatic: one Joseph E. Robinson of Washington wrote Librarian Young that "not until I stand before the Judgement Seat of God do I ever expect to see this building transcended, with its surging multitude of upturned faces gazing with rapture into the vistas of sublimity."

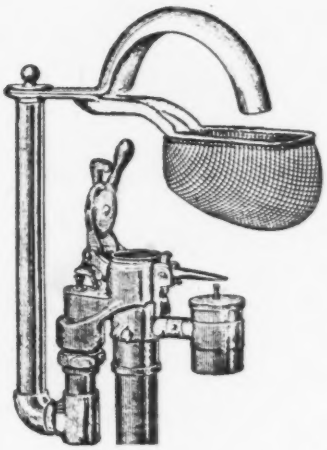
Young was quickly brought back to earth when he faced the task of filling the 66 new Library positions authorized by Congress, for he had to select from among 2,872 applicants, and the patronage demands of Congress were overwhelming. It is to Young's credit that he managed to fill many of the top-level positions in the Library with well-qualified men who played important roles in the future development

of LC: Thorvald Solberg was appointed the first Register of Copyrights, J. C. M. Hanson and Charles Martel came to the Catalogue Department, and Philip Lee Phillips became the first Superintendent of the new Hall of Maps and Charts.

Young's choice as Superintendent of the Reading Room was David Hutcheson, a Scotsman who had been with LC since 1874 and served as Spofford's right-hand man in the Old Library. In 1907, in spite of strong protests against his action, Hutcheson insisted on retiring; he pleaded his advancing years and a "premonition of ill health." He lived until 1933.

Librarian Young's tangle with the Anti-Saloon League of America and the WCTU over the question of serving liquor in the Library probably helped send his thoughts back to the advantages of the Orient. Wine and beer were discreetly sold when the building first opened, but the word quickly spread and Young endured a barrage of continuing protests from temperance groups. For example, the President of the World WCTU informed him "as the wineless dinner table of the well-to-do is perhaps the most salient feature of American society, on behalf of the American home we urge with earnest devotion that no intoxicants shall be offered as beverages in our National Library." The sales soon were stopped.

In spite of his many interests outside of the Library, Young paid close attention to Library matters and put his administrative talents to good use. He established separate departments of copyright, music, maps (the Hall of Maps and Charts, where a weather map was posted daily for public viewing), manuscripts, and prints and photographs (the Department of Graphic Arts). He used his State Department connections to establish new channels for overseas acquisitions and set up a reading room for the blind. He was also responsible for opening the Library during the evening for the first time, beginning October 1, 1898.

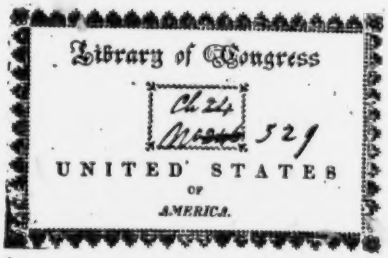


While Librarian, Young continued to write for his old newspaper, the New York Tribune; along with many other journalists of his day, he actively "promoted" the Spanish-American War. On August 18, 1898 John Russell Young, as imperialist-librarian, alerted his library staff to a new development: "now that the Government has taken possession of Manilla under circumstances that look into its permanent retention, we need to build up the collections on Manilla."

John Russell Young died on January 17, 1899, without returning to China. He was Librarian for less than two years, but he began to lay the administrative and organizational groundwork necessary for the growth of a truly national library. He worked hard at his job; in fact several newspapers even attributed his death to overwork at the Library. On January 20, 1899, the same newspapers were speculating about his successor at LC.

While Young's brief tenure was, in many ways, a brilliant episode in LC's history, his appointment had been strictly political. Professional librarians clamored to have one of their own named to the nation's top library post. They finally succeeded, but only because the Senate rejected another McKinley choice, Samuel J. Barrows, a "retiring" Congressman. The President finally was persuaded to appoint probably the most qualified librarian in the land, Herbert Putnam of the Boston Public Library (and the publishing family) as the eighth Librarian of Congress. More accurately perhaps, Putnam was finally persuaded to take the job.

An aristocrat with a bristling red mustache and a comparable temper, Putnam exercised near-dictatorial powers, demanding and receiving generous support from Congress. Confident and imaginative, he was the ideal person to carry forward the national library plans of Spofford and Young, and to add numerous innovations of his own. LC positively boomed under his leadership. Almost immediately he initiated the national services--classification, sale of printed catalog cards, interlibrary loan--one would expect from a national library. LC's appropriation soared, the papers of the Founding Fathers were transferred from the State Department, and the enterprising Librarian somehow obtained unparalleled private collections from Russia and Japan. By 1907, one decade after occupying its new building, LC not only was a "full-service" national library, it also was recognized as one of the leading libraries of the world.



BACON SLICING

During its first century, LC categorized knowledge according to the 44 chapters in Thomas Jefferson's classification scheme, which arrived intact with his library in 1815. Jefferson's chapters were based on the system of knowledge set forth by Francis Bacon, who used three human intellectual "faculties" as the foundation of his system. According to Bacon, Knowl was divided into three parts: History (Memory), Philosophy (Reason), and Poetry (Imagination).

In 1815, when Librarian of Congress George Watterston published The Catalogue of the Library of the United States - which was based on Jefferson's books and classified arrangement - nobody liked it. Watterston, as librarians are wont to do, tampered a bit with the original classification outline: Congress complained, and so did Jefferson. But the basic chapters of knowledge remained, and in spite of innumerable squeezings, rational expansions, and illogical modifications, Jefferson's view of knowledge was accepted by the Library of Congress until the 20th century.

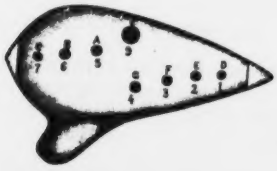
Subdivisions were added as new books, subjects, and LC catalogs appeared. In 1830 Canals achieved a new and separate status, and Roads and Rail-Roads arrived. So did Smelting. The same year Sporting was first recognized by LC and the need for Ventilating: Warming could no longer be ignored. Michigan was admitted in 1840. Electro-Magnetic Telegraph first appeared in 1849, and Photography made the scene in the 1861 catalog, the last of the classified book catalogs published by the Library. In that catalog Librarian of Congress John S. Meehan displayed a personal trait when he reduced the number of chapters based upon Imagination, and the total number of chapters shrunk from 44 to 40.

The Library's 1864 catalog was arranged alphabetically, reflecting the views of its compiler, Assistant Librarian Ainsworth Spofford. Distrusting all classification schemes, Spofford preferred any "convenient arrangement" which would enable him to serve books to Congressmen quickly. As Librarian he used the Jeffersonian system for the 35 years he was in office, but he applied thesystem loosely and subjectively and used his own rather curious notation scheme.

Spofford objected to close classification ("You cannot tear a book to pieces to satisfy logical classification") and felt that detailed notation was a wasted effort: "No sooner does some sapient librarian, with the sublime confidence of conviction, get his classification house of cards constructed in his mind, and stands in rapt admiration before it, when there comes along some wise man of the east, and demolishes the fair edifice at a blow, while the architect stands by with a melancholy smile, and sees all his household gods lying shivered around him."

Jefferson's scheme was again expanded to its original 44 chapters, grouped by Spofford into ten major subjects in the following order: History, Science and Technology, Religion, Law, Political and Social Sciences, Arts, Literature, Bibliography, Language, and Polygraphy. As the new books poured into the Library at the rate of over 15,000 a year, thousands of new subject and geographic subdivisions were added. For example, Massage, Ping Pong, Cold Storage, Cosmetics, Servants, Submarine Telegraphy, and Bullfighting appeared, and Roads and Railroads were separated. Landscape Gardening went from Fine Arts to Agriculture.

The notation scheme used by Spofford was a confusing fractional combination of Jefferson class and Library of Congress shelf number, the shelves having been apportioned among the subjects in the classification scheme, then assigned a number. But the Library ran out of shelf space in 1875, some 22 years before the new building was occupied, and books representing new subjects had to be crammed onto shelves already occupied by other subjects, or - more likely - piled on the floor "near" the proper location.



Obviously the maintenance of this system in a library overflowing with books was impossible, especially without a shelf-list or individual book numbers. In 1897, when the new building was occupied, everyone agreed that Accumulated Knowledge within LC needed to be divided up according to a new system.

Over 750,000 volumes needed recataloging and reclassification. Librarian Herbert Putnam assigned the responsibility for developing a new classification scheme to two men: James Christian Meinich Hanson, who came to LC from the University of Wisconsin, and Charles Martel, formerly of the Newberry Library. Contrary to Spofford's view, they argued that the diversity and immense size of the Library's collections made close classification imperative, and Putnam agreed. Hanson and Martel decided to develop an entirely new system, one based on the special character of LC's collections and the conditions of their use, with "no direct deference" to the possible use of the system by other libraries. Systems of knowledge and subject fields were ruthlessly juggled to fit LC's needs. Four major divisions were established: General Works (Class A), Humanities and Social Sciences (B-P), Natural Science and Technology (Q-V), and Bibliography and Library Science (Z). Their sequence was determined by the primary purpose of the Library--service to Congress. Appropriately, American History was the first subject reclassified, and the schedule was published in 1901. LC's own collections had replaced Bacon as the ultimate Arbitrator of Knowledge in the national library.

LC AND ITS COLLECTIONS
A CHRONOLOGY, 1800-1907

1800 (April 24) LC established.

1801 First shipment of books arrives (740 volumes purchased from England)

1802 (Jan. 29) John Beckley appointed as first Librarian of Congress.

1807 (Nov. 7) Patrick Magruder appointed Librarian of Congress.

1814 LC (in Capitol building) burned by British; all 3,000 volumes lost.

1815 (Jan. 30) Jefferson's 6,487-volume library acquired for $23,950, expanding LC's scope beyond that of a legislative library.

1815 (March 21) George Watterston appointed Librarian of Congress.

1818 LC moves from temporary quarters in Blodget's Hotel back into the Capitol.

1825 Fire in LC, but minimal damage to its collection of 14,000 volumes. Annual appropriation for purchase of books reaches $5,000.

1829 (May 28) John S. Meehan appointed Librarian of Congress.

1832 Law Library established with a separate book appropriation.

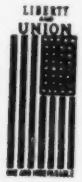
1834 (June 19) LC authorized to exchange U.S. government documents for other publications.

1836 Congress rejects purchase of renowned 25,000-volume of Count Buturlin of Florence (@ $50,000).

1840 (July 20) LC authorized to exchange its duplicates and to participate in international exchanges.

1846 (Aug. 10) New law entitles LC to one copy of all U.S. copyrighted materials - books, maps, music, and prints.

1851 Fire destroys 35,000 of the 55,000 volumes in LC, including 2/3 of Jefferson's books.



1857 (Jan. 28) Responsibility for international exchange transferred from LC to State Department and for distribution of public documents from LC to Interior Department.

1861 (May 24) John G. Stephenson appointed Librarian of Congress.

1864 One-volume alphabetical author catalog of LC's collections published.

1864 (Dec. 31) Ainsworth R. Spofford appointed Librarian of Congress.

1865 (March 3) Copyright law reinstated; LC to receive one copy of all deposits.

1865 First appropriation specifically for the acquisition of newspapers.

1866 (April 5) The 40,000-volume library of the Smithsonian Institution, exceptionally strong in scientific publications, is transferred to LC.

1866 Annual appropriation for the purchase of books reaches $8,000.

1867 (March 2) LC authorized to receive public documents from foreign nations through Smithsonian exchange program.

1867 (March 2) Purchase of $100,000 of Peter Force's personal library, the foundation of LC's collections of early Americana.

1867 LC becomes largest library in U.S.

1869 Subject catalog to LC's collections published (two volumes).

1869 LC receives gift of 933 volumes from the Emperor of China.

1870 (July 8) U.S. copyright activities centralized at LC, which will receive two copies of all deposits plus those sent to other offices before 1870; beginning of the dramatic expansion of LC's book, map, music, and graphic arts collections.

1871 Separate building for LC first advocated by the Librarian.

1878-1880 Publication of the last LC book catalog; alphabetical by author, but only two volumes published ("A-Cragin").

1882 (May 19) Gift of 43,000-volume library of Joseph M. Toner, the first sizable gift received from a private citizen.

1883 Rochambeau papers and maps purchased for $20,000.

1886 (March 16) Brussels Conventions establish procedures for receipt by LC of foreign official documents through exchange.

1886 (April 15) Congress authorizes the construction of a separate LC building.

1891 (March 3) International copyright law brings foreign works to LC.

1894 First motion pictures (paper prints) deposited in LC.

1896 Congress holds hearings concerning the reorganization and expansion of LC.

1897 (Feb. 19) Reorganization of LC enacted into law.

1897 (July 1) John Russell Young appointed Librarian of Congress.

1897 (Nov. 1) LC moves into its new building. Separate "departments" established for cataloging, copyright, arts, the Main Reading Room, manuscripts, periodicals, maps, music, and law. A reading room for the blind is also organized.

1898 Order Division is established. First use of American diplomats to obtain materials for LC.

1899 (April 5) Herbert Putnam takes office as the eighth Librarian of Congress.

1899 Annual appropriation for the increase of the Library reaches $21,000.

1900 Organization of the bibliography, documents, and Smithsonian Divisions.

1901 First table in the new LC classification scheme published. Beginning of interlibrary loan and sale of printed catalog cards. Annual appropriation for acquisitions reaches $60,000.

1901 LC becomes first American library to contain one million volumes.

1903 (March 9) Presidential executive order transfers the records and papers of the Continental Congress and the papers of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Hamilton, and Franklin from the State Department to LC.

1906 First substantial acquisition of Japanese books (over 9,000 volumes.)

1906 Yudin collection of over 80,000 volumes relating to Russia and Siberia acquired.

1907 LC receives its first phonograph record (cylinder recording of the voice of Kaiser Wilhelm II).